

### **Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

### **Listing of Claims:**

1 - 11. (Previously Canceled)

12. (Currently amended)     A An identity document comprising:

~~a flexible or rigid~~ an identity document substrate ~~comprising textile material, paper and/or plastic material, in particular plastic material in film form or card form, and~~  
a protective coating secured to the identity document substrate, wherein the protective coating is less than 1/50 mm thick and ~~in particular~~ has been deposited on the substrate out of the gas and/or plasma phase wherein the protective coating is not secured to the identity document substrate by adhesive.

13. (Currently Amended)     A An identity document as set forth in claim 12 wherein the protective coating comprises ~~has ceramic material, in particular metal oxides, and in particular consists of that material.~~

14. (Currently amended)     A An identity document as set forth in claim 12 wherein the coating contains silanes and/or silazanes.

15. (Currently amended)     A An identity document as set forth in claim 12 wherein the protective coating contains fluoride.

16. (Currently amended)     A An identity document as set forth in claim 12 wherein at least the an outside surface of the protective coating has self-cleaning properties.

17. (Currently Amended)     A An identity document as set forth in claim 12 wherein at least ~~the~~ an outside surface of the protective coating has self-healing properties.

18. (Currently Amended) A An identity document as set forth in claim 12 wherein the refractive index of the protective coating is irreversibly variable after application to the identity document substrate, ~~security document and in particular is irreversibly~~ variable.

19. (Currently Amended) A An identity document as set forth in claim 18 ~~claim 12~~ wherein the refractive index is variable by the action of laser light, ~~electromagnetic radiation, in particular light of a given wavelength, in particular by means of laser light.~~

20. (Currently Amended) A An identity document as set forth in claim 12 wherein the substrate comprises ~~Makrolon or~~ a polycarbonate.

21. (Currently Amended) A An identity document as set forth in claim 12 wherein the protective coating can be penetrated by laser light to personalize the substrate without producing an optical variation in the protective coating, ~~electromagnetic radiation, in particular laser light which results in an optical variation in the substrate, without an optical variation in the protective coating.~~

22. (Currently Amended) A An identity document as set forth in claim 12 wherein the substrate is provided with information on the surface thereof ~~with information, in particular labelling and/or image information, and in particular is printed with same, which is between the substrate and the protective coating~~ and the adhesion of the information ~~carriers~~ with respect to the protective coating is greater than with respect to the substrate.

23. (New) An identity document, comprising:

- an identity document substrate having a surface;
- a protective coating disposed on the surface; the protective coating is at least partially transparent, is less than 1/50 mm thick and is not secured to the surface by an adhesive layer.

24. (New) The identity document of claim 23, wherein the protective coating is less than 1/500 mm thick.
25. (New) The identity document of claim 23, wherein the identity document substrate comprises a plastic card.
26. (New) The identity document of claim 23, wherein the identity document substrate includes a magnetic strip or an electronic chip, and the protective coating is disposed over the magnetic strip or the electronic chip.
27. (New) The identity document of claim 23, wherein the protective coating comprises a ceramic material or a carbon material.
28. (New) The identity document of claim 23, wherein the surface includes individualization, and the individualization is covered by the protective coating.
29. (New) The identity document of claim 23, wherein the refractive index of the protective coating is irreversibly variable, and the protective coating includes at least one portion whose refractive index has been varied by laser radiation.
30. (New) The identity document of claim 29, where the protective coating includes a plurality of said portions, and at least some of the plurality of said portions vary in color.
31. (New) A method of protecting an identity document, comprising:  
providing an identity document substrate having a surface; and  
depositing a protective coating on the surface of the identity document substrate, wherein the protective coating is deposited on the surface out of a gas and/or plasma phase in a reaction chamber, and the protective coating is less than 1/50 mm thick.
32. (New) The method of claim 31, further comprising applying individualization to the surface after depositing the protective coating.

33. (New) The method of claim 31, further comprising irreversibly varying the refractive index of at least a portion of the protective coating using a laser.